

From: Roy Seneca/R3/USEPA/US
Sent: 3/16/2012 4:12:11 PM

To: Sphillips@whyy.org
CC: Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA
Subject: Re: EPA statement on initial water sampling results in Dimock, Pa.

Thanks Susan -- Terri or I will let you know if we have a response.

Roy Seneca
EPA Region 3 Press Officer
Office of Public Affairs
seneca.roy@epa.gov
(215) 814-5567

From: Susan Phillips <Sphillips@whyy.org>
To: Roy Seneca/R3/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 03/16/2012 04:05 PM
Subject: Re: EPA statement on initial water sampling results in Dimock, Pa.

Thanks Roy. Several environmental groups are calling the EPA's process biased and are asking the EPA to release the actual results. Here's a statement from Water Defense:

"We are deeply troubled that EPA Region 3 has allowed its investigation to be employed in the service of the gas industry spin machine before testing is even complete. We call on EPA Region 3 Administrator Shawn Garvin to immediately release the agency's test results publicly, so that independent scientists, the public, and the Dimock residents themselves can evaluate the findings thus far."

It seems like they are taking issue with several things, including the release of the 11 households before all tests are complete and the fact that the EPA doesn't have MCL's for a number of chemicals. And they're saying that Region 3 is handling this case different than similar cases in Pavilion, Wyo. And a case involving Range Resources in Texas.

Do you have a response to their critique?

Susan Phillips
Energy Reporter
StateImpactPA
215-351-2013 o
215-284-5740 c
sphillips@whyy.org
www.stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania
@stateimpactpa
--

From: Roy Seneca <Seneca.Roy@epamail.epa.gov>
Date: Fri, 16 Mar 2012 14:32:02 -0400
To: ~~Julian Herzfeld <Sphillips@whyy.org>~~
Subject: Re: EPA statement on initial water sampling results in Dimock, Pa.

Susan -- Once again, I apologize for the delay in getting back to you. Hopefully this information helps you.

You asked: Can you tell me what EPA actually tested for, and give me the details of what was found in the tests, compared to what the specific MCL's are?

In accordance with the Privacy Act, the Agency does not share an individual homeowner's sample results with the public. In general, we will offer a summary about our findings, which is what we did in our desk statement.

I have attached a copy of the final sampling plan for the Dimock area, which provides details of what EPA tested for... and here is a link to an EPA website that lists the mcls for drinking water contaminants.

Link to EPA MCLs: <http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/index.cfm>

Will the EPA be working to determine how the contaminants got into the water, or if they could be naturally occurring?
Proposed answer:

EPA has not done any detailed review to determine the cause. Our focus is first and foremost on the drinking water quality of residents

Roy Seneca
EPA Region 3 Press Officer
Office of Public Affairs
seneca.roy@epa.gov
(215) 814-5567

From: Susan Phillips <SPhillips@whyy.org>
To: Roy Seneca/R3/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 03/16/2012 10:55 AM
Subject: Re: EPA statement on initial water sampling results in Dimock, Pa.

Hi Roy, can you tell me what EPA actually tested for, and give me the details of what was found in the tests, compared to what the specific MCL's are?

Will the EPA be working to determine how the contaminants got into the water, or if they could be naturally occurring?

Thanks.

Susan Phillips
Energy Reporter
StateImpactPA
215-351-2013 o
215-284-5740 c
sPhillips@whyy.org
[@stateimpactpa](http://www.stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania)
--

From: Roy Seneca <Seneca.Roy@epamail.epa.gov>
Date: Thu, 15 Mar 2012 19:09:55 -0400
To: Julian Herzfeld <SPhillips@whyy.org>
Cc: Terri-A White <White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov>

Subject: Re: EPA statement on initial water sampling results in Dimock, Pa.

Susan -- Sorry for the delay.

What are the safe drinking water standards for the contaminants and what levels did you detect?

EPA's drinking water standards are Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs). Where an MCL exists for a parameter analyzed, it was provided along with the sampling results in the data package provided to the homeowner. Regardless, we did not detect any exceedances of MCLs for any of the 11 homes.

Is your health assessment based on longterm or short term impacts?

The toxicological analysis considered both short and long term effects.

One resident told me that her neighbors did have levels above the safe drinking water standard one for sodium and one for methane. If the sodium is high, would the health impacts be different for someone on blood pressure medication?

There are no federal drinking water standards for sodium or methane. We did find methane and sodium in some home wells sampled and in a couple of cases they were above trigger levels. This prompted us to do an earlier review by a toxicologist and to expedite a quality assurance review should we need to take an immediate action to provide water. EPA conducted those reviews and found no health concerns. EPA officials can explain these results more thoroughly in our meeting with individual homeowners.

Did your health impacts take into consideration any of the special needs of individual residents?

We did not take into account any special circumstances as we are not privy to any individual restrictions or health concerns. EPA toxicology reviews are however conservative to allow for sensitive populations.

Did you determine how the contaminants got into the water?

EPA has not done any detailed review to determine the cause. Our focus is first and foremost on the drinking water quality of residents.

Do you know when tests for the other 50 households will be completed?

EPA is planning to release sampling results to the home owners on a weekly basis in the order in which the homes were sampled. Our sampling effort began the week of January 23rd and continued for three and half weeks through March 15th.

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Office of Public Affairs
seneca.roy@epa.gov
(215) 814-5567

From: Susan Phillips <SPhillips@why.org>
To: Roy Seneca/R3/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 03/15/2012 05:27 PM
Subject: Re: EPA statement on initial water sampling results in Dimock, Pa.

Hi Roy, Here are my questions:

What are the safe drinking water standards for the contaminants and what levels did you detect?
Is your health assessment based on longterm or short term impacts?
One resident told me that her neighbors did have levels above the safe drinking water standard one for sodium and one for methane.
If the sodium is high, would the health impacts be different for someone on blood pressure medication? Did your health impacts take into consideration any of the special needs of individual residents?
Did you determine how the contaminants got into the water?
Do you know when tests for the other 50 households will be completed?

Thanks.
Susan Phillips
Energy Reporter
StateImpactPA
215-351-2013 o
215-284-5740 c
sphillips@whyy.org
[@stateimpactpa](http://www.stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania)
--

From: Roy Seneca <Seneca.Roy@epamail.epa.gov>
Date: Thu, 15 Mar 2012 15:57:08 -0400
To: Julian Herzfeld <Sphillips@whyy.org>
Cc: Terri-A White <White.Terri-A@epamail.epa.gov>
Subject: EPA statement on initial water sampling results in Dimock, Pa.

Susan -- You had asked us to keep you updated when EPA had new information on drinking water sampling in Dimock. Here is the EPA statement we are issuing today about the first round of sampling at 11 homes.

On Jan. 19, as a result of requests from residents and a review of the data we had in hand, EPA announced it would perform water sampling at approximately 60 homes in the Carter Road/Meshoppen Creek Road area of Dimock, Pa. to further assess whether any residents are being exposed to hazardous substances that cause health concerns.

The first round of sampling results is now available for the first 11 homes that were tested during the week of Jan. 23. Sampling results from these 11 homes did not show levels of contamination that could present a health concern. Samples from six of the 11 homes did show concentrations of sodium, methane, chromium or bacteria, but concentrations were all within the safe range for drinking water. The sampling results also identified the presence of arsenic at two homes.

Out of the 11 homes tested, there are currently three homes receiving an alternate water supply provided by EPA. EPA will continue to provide water to these homes while we perform additional sampling to ensure that the drinking water quality at these homes remains consistent and acceptable for use over time. EPA is also taking a second round of samples from the two homes where arsenic was detected, and although the levels meet water standards, we will resample to better characterize the water quality of these wells. After receiving results from the second round of sampling, EPA will re-evaluate the need to continue providing an alternate water source.

EPA has offered to meet with all the residents to go over their data and answer any health-related concerns. As further quality assured data becomes available for the remaining homes, we will share with the homeowners in an expedited manner. Our actions will continue to be based on the science and the law as we work to help get a clear picture of water quality for these homes in Dimock.

Roy Seneca
EPA Region 3 Press Officer
Office of Public Affairs
seneca.roy@epa.gov
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